



Be Clear When Backing

In the course of our daily driving experience, it is frequently necessary to back vehicles out of parking spots, from driveways or other congested areas. Hitting an object while backing is a leading cause of property damage accidents. When the object is a person, the situation can become disastrous.

Michael L. Funk, director of transportation services at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN, offers several techniques to minimize the potential for backing incidents. With some practice, these techniques will become habits and greatly reduce your chance of having a serious collision.

- **Plan ahead and avoid backing whenever possible.** When practical, park vehicles so they will not have to be backed at a later time. If backing will be necessary, and it is practical, back the vehicle before leaving it.
- **When approaching a vehicle that will have to be backed,** check the rear of the vehicle and anticipate where another vehicle or pedestrian could reach the rear of the vehicle while it is backing. The path the vehicle will take while backing must be clear of obstacles.
- **Never back a vehicle when the rear windows - or any mirrors - are covered** with frost, snow or other substances that keep you from visually clearing the path the vehicle will take while backing.
- **Once behind the wheel, with the engine running and the vehicle in reverse,** check the area again by turning and visually clearing the path that the vehicle will take. In a larger vehicle, use both side mirrors to check and visually clear the rear.
- **Honk the horn** once or twice to warn everyone that you are going to back up.
- **Check the mirrors** or turn around while backing.

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